

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

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PRESS RELEASE

February 16, 2006

RE: UNITED STATES v. SHIRLEY LITTLE

Acting United States Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter, announced today the filing of a Criminal Complaint charging Shirley Little, age 50, of Buffalo, New York, with converting approximately \$42,752.00 in property of the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641, carrying a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

Little appeared before United States Magistrate Judge H. Kenneth Schroeder, Jr. on February 15, 2006 pursuant to a Summons. The Criminal Complaint alleges that beginning in 1992, Little was the representative payee for her mother, Mattie Little's Supplemental Security Income disability payments. As alleged in the Criminal Complaint, Mattie Little died on December 30, 1993, however, Shirley Little continued to receive and cash Mattie Little's SSI checks until in or about May 2005. In a statement given to the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, Little admitted that her mother died (she believed on New Year's Eve 1999) and that she had been intentionally cashing her mother's SSI checks. Little has been charged with converting to her own use approximately \$42,752 in money that was property of the United States.

It should be noted that “the fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime . . . is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. (**Disciplinary Rule 7-107(B)(6)**).

Assistant U.S. Attorney Allison P. Gioia, who will handle the case, stated that Little, who made her first court appearance on February 15, 2006, was released on her own recognizance. The next court appearance is scheduled for April 12, 2006 before United States Magistrate Judge H. Kenneth Schroeder, Jr.

The filing of the Criminal Complaint against Little was the result of an investigation by the United States Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General.